

# Spice Up Your Life!

**Eat Less Salt and Sodium**



**NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH**  
NATIONAL HEART, LUNG, AND BLOOD INSTITUTE  
AND OFFICE OF RESEARCH ON MINORITY HEALTH



# Why should you eat less salt and sodium?

**Y**ou should cut back on salt and sodium in your diet to help prevent or lower blood pressure. If you have high blood pressure, lowering it can reduce your chances of heart disease and stroke.



## Did you know....

Table salt is made up of two compounds—sodium and chloride. Most of the sodium in your diet comes from processed foods. The remaining comes from the salt added at the table and salt added while cooking. Limit the amount of sodium that you consume from all these sources to no more than 2,400 milligrams (mg) each day. This is equal to about 1 teaspoon of salt.





# Tips to Eating Less Salt and Sodium

## Be a smart shopper.

- **Read the food label** to find out more about what is in the foods you eat. This will help you limit the amount of sodium you eat to 2,400 mg each day.

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>		
Serving Size: 1 cup (228 g)		
Serving Per Package 2		
Amount Per Serving		
<b>Calories</b> 260    Calories from fat 120		
	(% Daily Value)	
<b>Total Fat</b> 13g		20%
Saturated Fat 5g		25%
<b>Cholesterol</b> 30mg		10%
<b>Sodium</b> 600mg		28%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 31g		10%
Dietary Fiber 0g		0%
Sugars 5g		
<b>Protein</b> 5g		
Vitamin A 4% • Vitamin C 2%		
Calcium 15% • Iron 4%		
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:		
	Calories:	2,000      2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g      80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g      25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg      300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg      2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g      375g
Dietary Fiber		25g      30g
Calories per gram:		
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4		

- **Size up your food.** Compare the amounts you will eat to the serving size given. If you eat 2 cups and the serving size is 1 cup, you have to double the amounts of nutrients and calories listed.
- **Read the nutrition information.** Use the Percent Daily Value to compare the amount of sodium among brands. Choose those foods that have lower values. One serving of this product contains 28 percent, or about 1/4 of the amount of sodium you should have for the entire day.

- **Buy foods with these claims more often.** The food label may include terms such as:

sodium free  
low sodium  
light in sodium

light in sodium  
reduced (or less) sodium  
unsalted



## **Choose More Often:**

Chicken and turkey (take off skin)

Lean cuts of meat

Fish: Fresh or frozen

Skim or 1% milk, evaporated skim milk

Cheese: lower or reduced in sodium

Loaf breads, dinner rolls, English muffin, bagels, pita, and  
salt-free chips

Cereals: some hot cereals and some ready-to-eat cold  
cereals lowest in sodium\*

Plain rice and noodles

Fresh, frozen, or no salt added canned vegetables

Fruits

Soups: lower or reduced in sodium

Margarine, vegetable oils

Spices, herbs, and flavorings like oregano, garlic powder,  
onion powder, salt free seasoning blends,  
vinegar, and fruit juices



## Choose Less Often:

Hogmaws, ribs, and chitterlings

Smoked or cured meats like bacon, bologna, hot dogs, ham,

corned beef, luncheon meats, and sausage

Canned fish like tuna, salmon, sardines, and mackerel\*\*

Buttermilk+

Most cheese spreads and cheeses

Salty chips, nuts, pretzels, or pork rinds

Some cold (ready to eat) cereals highest in sodium, instant hot cereals

Quick cooking rice and instant noodles, boxed mixes like rice, scalloped potatoes, macaroni and cheese,++ and some frozen dinners, pot pies and pizza\*

Regular canned vegetables\*\*

Pickled foods like herring, pickles, relish, olives, or sauerkraut

Regular canned soups, instant soups

Butter, fatback, and salt pork

Soy sauce, steak sauce, salad dressing, ketchup, barbecue sauce, garlic salt, onion salt, seasoned salts like lemon pepper, bouillon cubes, meat tenderizer, and monosodium glutamate (MSG)\*

**\*Read the food label to choose those lower in sodium.**

**\*\*Rinse canned fish or vegetables before using.**

+Although buttermilk is high in sodium, 1 percent or skim buttermilk can be used in cooking to replace whole milk or fat.

++Modify cooking directions and prepare with less salt, if possible.



## Go easy in the kitchen.

- **Use less salt and seasoned salt when you cook.**
- Use the spices and herbs or low sodium seasonings like sodium-free bouillon or onion powder, garlic powder, and sodium-free seasoning blends.

- Try these:
  - Sprinkle lemon juice over vegetables.
  - To bring out the flavor, season or marinate meat, poultry and fish before cooking. Use onion, garlic, and your favorite herbs.



- **Take steps to make meals lower in salt and sodium.**

- Use smoked or salt-cured meat products only in small amounts for flavoring.
- Prepare fresh lean pork roast instead of country ham.
- Rinse canned vegetables and fish such as tuna to remove some sodium.





## Take the lead out of the table.

- Remove the salt shaker. Keep the pepper shaker.
- Taste the food first. If you must add salt, use "one" shake instead of two or more.
- Cut down on the amount of salty prepared sauces or condiments you use.

## Be in control at the restaurant.

- Choose foods without sauces. If you prefer, ask for sauce and salad dressing to be served "on the side."
- Ask for your meal to be prepared without salt or monosodium glutamate (MSG). Then if you must, you can add a small amount of salt.





## Check the things you will do to eat less salt and sodium.

- ☐ Read food labels. Choose foods that have the lowest Percent Daily Value for sodium. Also buy foods that are labeled “reduced sodium,” “low sodium,” “sodium free,” or “no salt added.”
- ☐ Buy fruits and vegetables for snacks. Choose chips, crackers, or nuts that are lower in sodium.
- ☐ Take the salt shaker off the table.
- ☐ Choose "no salt added" regular canned vegetables, vegetable juices, soups, sauces, and gravies. Most frozen vegetables without sauces are low in sodium.
- ☐ Choose fresh or frozen lean cuts of meat, fish, and poultry.
- ☐ Season your food with herbs and spices instead of salt.



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